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The Success of the 'President's Men'

EXCERPTED

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E. Howard Hunt Jr.

MR. HUNT is one of the few Watergate alumni to insist that the scandal still hurts his career and pocketbook.

The 67-year-old former C.I.A. operative, a White House consultant who was never in the higher echelons of power, served nearly three years in prison for his role in the Watergate break-in. His wife died in a plane crash in 1972, and he was physically attacked while in prison.

Now a Miami resident, Mr. Hunt says he will move soon to Guadalajara, Mexico, mainly because he wants his children from his second marriage to learn Spanish.

The author of dozens of spy novels during his C.I.A. years, Mr. Hunt continues to write. His most recent book, "Cozumel," is a thriller about an undercover narcotics officer stationed in Mexico, who spends half his time entwined with young women and the other half killing drug smugglers.

Audrey Eisman, publicity director of Stein & Day, publisher of "Cozumel," says that Watergate was not a factor in deciding to accept Mr. Hunt's books. And she does not believe the scandal affects their sales.

Mr. Hunt's novels are page-turners and have sold well. He has written six books since Watergate; at least three more are in the works.

He has also just written a musical about the celebrated

Rhode Island murder trial of Claus von Bülow. He says that investors' response to his script was excellent, and believes that up to \$4 million can be raised. That amount, he says, will allow the play to open on Broadway, possibly as early as December.

With all this, Mr. Hunt insists that Watergate has significantly hurt his career. "It became very difficult after

Watergate to find a publisher," he said. "Talk about a blacklist in the 1950's — many publishers said they wouldn't touch Howard Hunt with a 10-foot pole." No publisher would accept his prison diary, he says. "The liberals are the first to talk about free speech, but they're also the first to close the door on you."

Besides writing, Mr. Hunt lectures — on terrorism, for example. In all, he lives comfortably, he says, but insists that he is not as well off as before Watergate. ■



The New York Times/Gerald Davis

Still an author

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